



# ENGAGED LEARNING IN THE FARMINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

May 1, 2023

## Farmington High School

### **NHS & Red Cross Club host Blood Drive**

The National Honor Society partnered with the Red Cross Club to sponsor a Red Cross blood drive at FHS. Danielle Huntington, our Red Cross liaison, shared the good news that the drive was very successful. She told us the following:

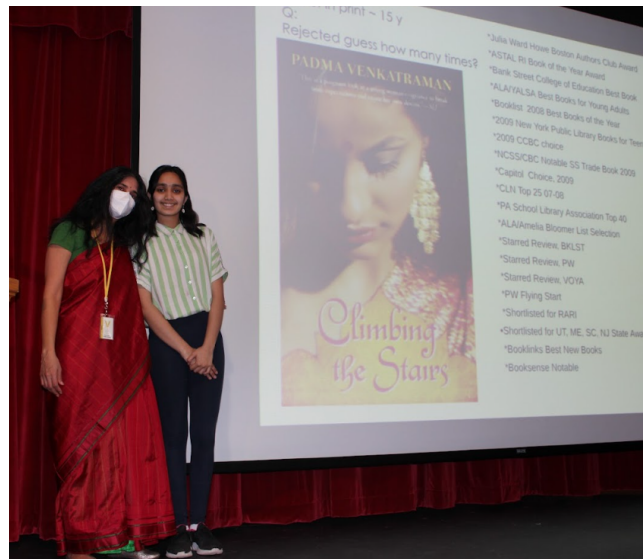
"Our goal was to collect 25 units (1 unit = 1 donation) and we far surpassed that and ended up with 31 units. The students did such an amazing job properly educating and preparing their donors that we had our lowest deferral (turn away) number in years. Every unit of blood saves 3 lives and because of their hard work, almost 100 people will receive the lifesaving treatment and transfusions that they need to see another day."



## Irving A. Robbins

### **Author Visit with Dr. Padma Venkatraman**

7th and 8th grade global citizens at I.A.R. were privileged to hear from renowned YA author, Padma Venkatraman at the end of March. Dr. Venkatraman has written several novels that our students read over the course of their time at both West Woods and Irving Robbins. Her visit began with a small group meet-and-greet with several of our students who were able to pose questions to her about her reading life, her writing process, and how she became a writer (she has a fascinating background!). Dr. Venkatraman then addressed the whole school on the importance of diversity, especially in texts, and compassion.



## Earth Day Celebrations

April 22 is recognized as a global day to celebrate nature and bring awareness to our Earth. Eighth grade students toured the IAR campus to explore different aspects directly around us that have an impact on our area. As they walked the outskirts of the wetlands area, one of our paraprofessional experts and IAR Garden Club advisor, Ms. Jerkiewicz, introduced students to the importance of flood control, controlling pollutants, drought protection and the ecosystem. Mr. Mullaj, one of our dedicated custodians, educated students about our science courtyard, which includes our pond and greenhouse. He emphasized growing local food and caring for our duck friends, who return to nest each year and provide us with an opportunity to watch their ducklings grow and mature throughout the spring! Back in science class, students offer suggestions and reflect on their contributions as citizens to help keep people, ecosystems and wildlife healthy. Seventh grade advisory classes chose to explore a topic related to our larger Farmington community, which could have included topics related to the Farmington Green Efforts Commission, local farms, our community garden plots, the Farmington River and our local water department.



## West Woods Upper Elementary School

West Woods sixth graders have been engaged in the study of Latin America. Students kicked off the unit with a geography exploration to develop a sense of location and understanding of the landforms in this region. Students explored images to define "What is a Civilization?" where they developed the understanding of the universal components of a civilization (government, religion, jobs, social classes, writing/communication, cities/technology, arts). They used those categories to develop research questions about the Maya, Inca, and Aztec Peoples. Further conversations were had about culture and how people's perspective, practices and products play a significant role.

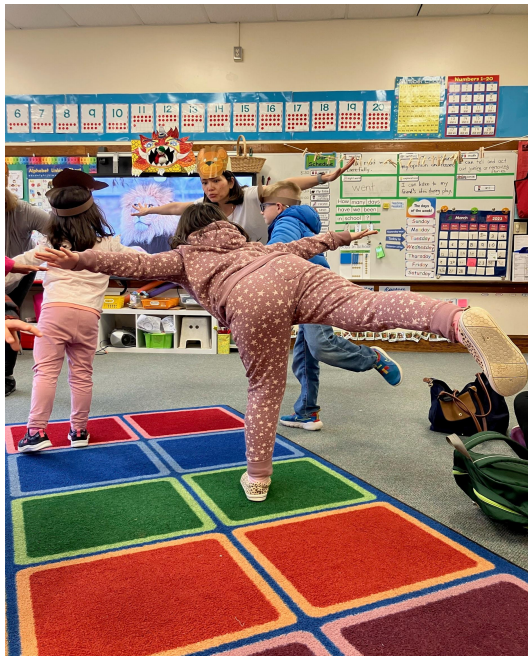
On April 6, West Woods sixth graders enjoyed a daylong celebration of Latin America by holding a FIESTA! This day is a part of our social studies unit on Latin America. The day began with an assembly by Trio Surcari, a Latin American musical group, who performed authentic dance and instrumental music. In preparation for this fiesta, students made crafts related to Latin American culture, which they sold to other students in the Mercado (marketplace) on the morning of the fiesta. Overall, it was a wonderful experience for students and staff alike.



## Union School

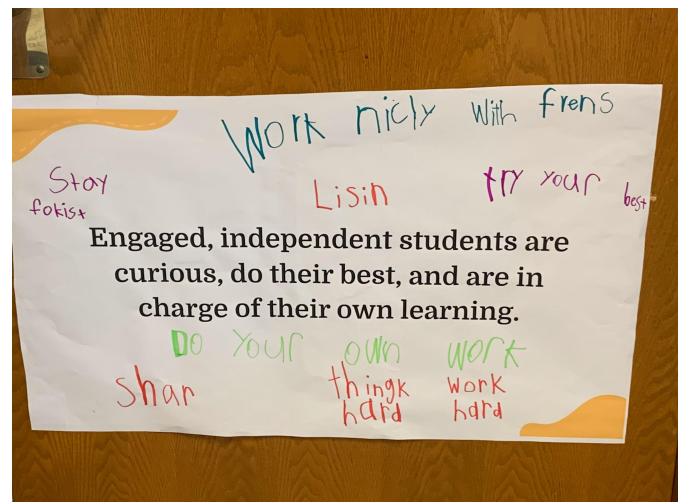
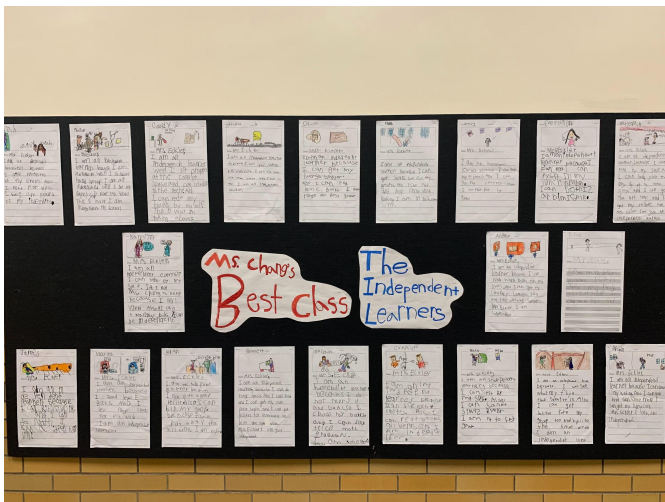
### Kindergarten and Grade 1 Reading Night at the Zoo

On March 28th, Union School Kindergarten and first grade students and their families were invited to attend a special literacy night event, Night at the Zoo. Each classroom had a different theme/activity related to an area or animal at the zoo. There were also craft activities and an amazing photo booth. We had amazing attendance at this family event.



### Engaged, Independent Learners Across the School

The Union School community has come up with one, unifying definition of what it means to be an engaged, independent learner. Through focus groups and class meetings this definition was developed with input from every student in the school. Once a definition was narrowed down, it was shared with the community at our March celebration assembly. Each classroom is working to annotate and develop the definition further based on the norms and expectations of their grade level and classroom community.



## East Farms

First graders have been busy learning all about the weather in science! We have studied the different parts of weather and how it affects our lives.

Some first graders then started to inquire more about precipitation. These **Empowered Learners** asked questions, such as: "Where does the rain come from?" and, "What happens to the water in puddles after it rains?" These questions led to studies about the water cycle. After researching and learning, we made our own water cycle experiments!

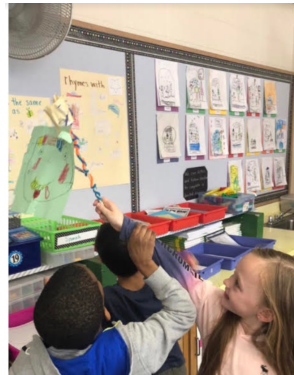
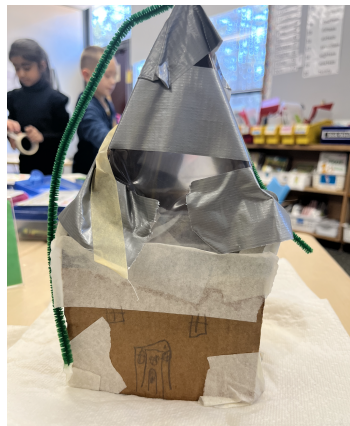


Other first graders spent more time studying and researching all about the wind! These **Disciplined Thinkers** then used different materials to design, build, and test their own wind tools!



## West District Elementary School

West District's first grade tigers developed skills as **Disciplined Thinkers** and **Engaged Collaborators** through two engineering projects related to our science and social studies units of study. Our social studies unit (Geography and the World) focused on the question "How does geography affect the way people live?" The unit culminated with an engineering task in which students were challenged to design, build and test a house that would stay dry inside, proving a successful construction. Throughout the process, students were disciplined thinkers as they demonstrated flexibility, persistence, logical reasoning, and creativity. Additionally, they developed skills as engaged collaborators through active listening to the ideas of others, effective communication, compromise, and adaptability all while having fun. Later in our weather unit, first graders had the opportunity to hone these skills as they worked in teams to develop a tool that would measure the speed of the wind. This task tested students' persistence as many of their initial attempts did not work. They practiced flexible thinking and adaptability by considering what they would do differently on a second attempt.



## Noah Wallace School

At the Annual Meeting of the Farmington Land Trust on April 21, Ms. Nelson and her Noah Wallace kindergarten students were recognized as “Stewards of the Year.” Ms. Nelson and her class have been actively involved in promoting conservation and sustainability practices at Noah Wallace and in the Farmington community. Ms. Nelson and her students regularly visit one of Farmington’s Land Trust properties known as the Bull Lot. They have learned the importance of stewardship and have been actively involved in taking care of the property and learning about the plants and animals that live in that habitat. These students understand the role of the steward and how it has helped them become civic-minded contributors. One student stated in a book they wrote, “I am a good steward when I am planting seeds and watering plants.” Another student read a poem at the meeting that she wrote about the Bull Lot:

At the Bull Lot  
By: Zohana  
Nature and  
Water for animals to drink  
Scientists learning  
Amazing discoveries  
Waiting to be found

